

Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever Fact Sheet

1. **What is Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF)?** - CCHF is caused by infection with a tick-borne virus (*Nairovirus*) in the family *Bunyaviridae*. The disease was first characterized in the Crimea in 1944 and given the name Crimean hemorrhagic fever. It was then later recognized in 1969 as the cause of a disease outbreak in the Congo. CCHF is found in Eastern Europe, particularly in the former Soviet Union. It is also distributed throughout the Mediterranean, in northwestern China, central Asia, southern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent.

2. **How is CCHF virus spread?** - Ixodid (hard) ticks, especially those of the genus *Hyalomma*, are both a host and a transmitter of the CCHF virus. Numerous wild and domestic animals, such as cattle, goats, sheep and hares, serve as amplifying hosts for the virus. Transmission to humans occurs through contact with infected animal blood or through bites from infected ticks. CCHF can be transmitted from one infected human to another by contact with infectious blood or body fluids.

3. **What are the symptoms of CCHF?** - The onset of CCHF is sudden, with initial signs and symptoms including headache; high fever; back, joint and stomach pain; and vomiting. Red eyes, a flushed face, a red throat, and a pin point rash on the roof of the mouth are common. Symptoms may also include jaundice, and in severe cases, changes in mood and sensory perception. As the illness progresses, large areas of severe bruising, severe nosebleeds, and uncontrolled bleeding can be seen, beginning on about the fourth day of illness and lasting for about two weeks. The case-fatality rate ranges from 2% to 50%, with most fatalities occurring between day 5 and 14 of infection.

4. **What treatments are available?** - The antiviral drug, Ribavirin, may work if administered early in the course of the disease in combination with convalescent plasma containing large quantities of neutralizing antibody. Generally, patients receive supportive therapy which consists of balancing the patient's fluids and electrolytes, maintaining their oxygen status and blood pressure, and treating them for any complicating infections. No vaccine is available.

5. **How is the disease prevented?** - Agricultural workers and others working with animals in endemic areas should use insect repellent on exposed skin and clothing. Repellents containing DEET are the most effective in warding off ticks. Wearing gloves and other protective clothing is recommended. Individuals should also avoid contact with the blood and body fluids of livestock or humans who show symptoms

of infection. It is important for healthcare workers to use proper infection control precautions to prevent occupational exposure.

6. For more information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/spb/mnpages/dispages/cchf.htm>

This fact sheet provides general information. Please contact your physician and/or veterinarian for specific clinical information related to you or your animal.

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